

Vol. 1
1956

FOREIGN POLICY IN POLITICAL CAMPAIGNS

by

William T. Stone

	PAGE
CAMPAIGN MANEUVERING ON FOREIGN POLICY	83
Efforts to Keep Politics Out of Foreign Policy	84
Attempts to Define Limits for Partisan Debate	84
Record of the Parties on Foreign Policy Matters	86
Storm Over Dulles's "Brink-of-War" Statements	87
FOREIGN AFFAIRS DEBATES IN PEACE AND WAR	90
Controversy Over Imperialism at Turn of Century	90
Wilson-Hughes "Keeping-Out-of-War" Campaign, 1916	91
League of Nations in the 1920 Presidential Contest	92
War and Postwar Issues in 1940 and 1944 Elections	94
Strain on Bipartisan Foreign Policy in 1948 Canvass	97
PARTISANSHIP AND BIPARTISANSHIP, 1952 AND 1956	98
Attacks on Democratic Foreign Policy in 1952 Race	98
Threat to Bipartisanship in 1956 Foreign Aid Plans	99
Two-Party Support for Treatment of Soviet Russia	100

No. 5
Feb. 2

THE right to reproduce material contained in *Editorial Research Reports* is strictly reserved to the newspaper clients of the service. Verbatim use of such material by others will be permitted only upon written authorization of the editor.

RICHARD M. BOECKEL, *Editor*

Editorial Research Reports
1205 Nineteenth Street, N.W.
Washington

FOREIGN POLICY IN POLITICAL CAMPAIGNS

A MERICAN foreign policy—a controversial political issue in 1952—has again moved into the forefront of partisan debate as the country gets into gear for another presidential contest. Despite talk of a truce on discussion of foreign affairs during the 1956 campaign, political controversy has been rising over the manner in which the nation should discharge its responsibilities as leader of the free world.

By linking peace abroad to prosperity at home, and citing maintenance of the two as a major reason for returning Republicans to power, the party in control of the Executive Branch has made the policies to which it attributes peace inevitably a subject of campaign discussion. Recently, moreover, a Cabinet official had a hand in putting foreign policy squarely into politics. A magazine article based on interviews with Secretary of State Dulles¹ apparently was calculated to add luster to the Eisenhower administration's record in foreign affairs. However, some of the statements attributed to Dulles backfired. Leading Democrats fanned the political flames by assailing the Secretary for what they considered reckless readiness to take the nation to "the brink of war."

Another controversy was stirred up about the same time by Gen. Matthew B. Ridgway, former Army chief of staff. He asserted, also in a magazine article,² that reductions in expenditures decreed in the "new-look" defense budget a year after President Eisenhower took office were based on "advantages to be gained in the field of domestic politics." Both the Dulles and the Ridgway controversies raised questions about the soundness of the administration's foreign and defense policies and about the propriety of subjecting such matters to the rough and tumble of campaign exchanges.

¹ James Shepley, "How Dulles Averted War," *Life*, Jan. 14, 1956, pp. 71-80.

² Matthew B. Ridgway, "My Battles in War and Peace," *Saturday Evening Post*, Jan. 21, 1956, pp. 17-19.

Editorial Research Reports

EFFORTS TO KEEP POLITICS OUT OF FOREIGN POLICY

Most Republican and Democratic leaders seem to be agreed that it is neither possible nor advisable to put a gag on discussion of foreign policy in a presidential campaign. While recognizing that free discussion of foreign affairs in an election year will inevitably involve criticism of one party by the other, they still voice hope that the debate can be kept on a high plane, personalities eliminated, and partisan excesses avoided.

Sen. Walter F. George (D-Ga.), chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, led off current pleas for moderation and restraint when he called last November for continuation of a "non-partisan foreign policy regardless of who wins in 1956." President Eisenhower promptly endorsed that advice.³ But George set limits on his expressed hope that foreign policy might be excluded from partisan debate; he observed that "a certain quantum of politics is unavoidable" and that constructive criticism can be useful even in an election year.

Political writers saw no prospect of avoiding partisan discussion of foreign affairs in the campaign; many regarded such debate as highly desirable. Arthur Krock, for example, asserted in the *New York Times* on Dec. 1 that the conduct of foreign policy by the administration of President Eisenhower was "an inevitable and proper campaign issue."

Many Democrats who urged restraint contended at the same time that a full and frank probing of foreign issues was long overdue. Sen. Mansfield (D-Mont.) repeatedly urged a candid "review and reappraisal of the foreign policy of the United States," particularly in its application to the Middle East and Asia. James P. Warburg expressed a view shared by a number of Democrats and independents when he wrote: "The question is not whether foreign policy can or should be kept out of politics, but whether irresponsible partisan politics can be kept out of a long overdue, common-sense discussion of foreign policy."⁴

Attempts to fix limits for partisan debate on foreign affairs have been made by both party organizations. Chair-

³ The White House announced, Nov. 26, that the President had read and approved the George statement, made two days earlier in a *New York Herald Tribune* interview.

⁴ James P. Warburg, "Needed: A Vital Debate," *New York Times Magazine*, Jan. 15, 1956, p. 14.

Foreign Policy in Political Campaigns

man Paul M. Butler of the Democratic National Committee suggested on Nov. 28 that it was time to establish the "ground rules for 1956." Butler said: "Bipartisanship in foreign policy applies not just to the opposition party; it applies with equal force to the party in power. If Republicans are ready to forgo the exploitation of foreign policy for partisan advantage, they will find Democrats meeting them more than half way."

Sen. Alexander Wiley (R-Wis.), ranking minority member of the Foreign Relations Committee, proposed the following day that the two parties adopt a "code of self-restraint" to govern foreign policy debate throughout the campaign. Vice President Nixon later joined Wiley and other congressional leaders in urging adherence to a statesmanlike code to eliminate partisan excesses.

Secretary Dulles carried the discussion a step farther at a news conference on Nov. 29 by welcoming constructive criticism of current American foreign programs. Dulles defined constructive criticism as that which "suggests something better . . . than our present policies," bearing in mind that bipartisan unity is the key to success of the present policies of the United States. On the latter point the Secretary said:

It needs to be remembered that those hostile to the United States and its ideals are not going to take a vacation so that we here can safely concentrate on a domestic political battle. . . . Our nation will need the same bipartisan unity which in the past has given authority, vitality, and much success to our foreign policies.

It is to be hoped that partisan debate will not disrupt or disparage this process, which is necessary to give to United States foreign policy the stability required if our friends abroad are to depend upon it and if our enemies abroad are to respect it.

The possibility of working out a bipartisan agreement to place certain areas of foreign policy out of bounds during the campaign has been advanced. Secretary Dulles, who played an active role in negotiations to keep the United Nations and other foreign issues out of the 1944 wartime campaign, told his news conference on Jan. 24 that he was attempting to do the same thing this year on one or two issues. He did not identify the questions he wanted to exclude from partisan debate in 1956, although it was reported that one issue he had in mind was the Arab-Israeli dispute. Dulles said he saw little prospect of reaching

Editorial Research Reports

an agreement of mutual forbearance until the presidential candidates had been nominated.

Hope that the Arab-Jewish issue could be kept out of the campaign was diminished by a statement issued by former President Truman and Mrs. Franklin D. Roosevelt, Jan. 28, calling upon the United States to balance Communist arms shipments to Egypt by supplying defensive weapons to Israel. Three days later, however, Truman gave high praise to White House handling of another delicate foreign issue; he called President Eisenhower's reply to Soviet Premier Bulganin's proposal for a 20-year treaty of friendship "the best thing he's done in foreign affairs."

RECORD OF THE PARTIES ON FOREIGN POLICY MATTERS

Republican and Democratic spokesmen indicated long ago that party records in the conduct of foreign relations would become controversial issues in the 1956 campaign. Republicans displayed confidence that achievements of the Eisenhower administration in the foreign field would withstand any criticism, and the party managers lost no opportunity to capitalize on the theme of peace and prosperity. The Democrats, while avoiding direct attacks on the President at the outset, nevertheless made it clear that they intended to assail the Republican record on major foreign issues.

Former President Truman, Adlai E. Stevenson, and Gov. Averell Harriman of New York, all of whom have endorsed the principle of bipartisanship in foreign policy, left no doubt that they regarded the Republican record as a proper target of constructive criticism. Stevenson, who had called for moderation on Nov. 19 in his initial speech as an avowed candidate for the Democratic nomination, said the Eisenhower administration had made many mistakes in foreign policy. It had been a mistake to "bluff and bluster"; it had been a mistake to create a "false sense of security" during the summit meeting at Geneva; and it had been a mistake to allow the initiative to slip away when competitive coexistence subsequently became the order of the day.

Gov. Harriman seemed to go considerably beyond the limits for criticism set by Stevenson and Sen. George. Harriman directed a frontal attack on the administration's record. At Seattle, Nov. 21, he charged the Republican leadership with "three years of incompetence and short-

Foreign Policy in Political Campaigns

sightedness in the conduct of the foreign relations of this country."

At the party organization level both national committees have been issuing partisan broadsides reminiscent of the 1952 campaign while talking of a truce in 1956. Republican National Committee handouts have made only passing reference to bipartisanship in foreign policy—which they say was restored by the Eisenhower administration—and have implied that the Republican leadership deserves exclusive credit for creating conditions of "peace with honor . . . achieved through firm negotiation and not as the result of appeasement."⁵

The Democratic National Committee has complained that Republican spokesmen seize every opportunity to capitalize politically on foreign developments. Democratic Chairman Butler pointed out last Nov. 28 that Republican Chairman Leonard W. Hall had "time and again said that 'Peace' will be the Republicans' chief password in 1956." But in mid-January the Democrats turned their fire on Secretary Dulles's personal "brink-of-war" diplomacy.

STORM OVER DULLES'S "BRINK-OF-WAR" STATEMENTS

The storm aroused by *Life* magazine's article on Secretary Dulles left in its wake a political controversy that intensified partisan recrimination and greatly increased the difficulty of maintaining a non-partisan approach to foreign policy. *Life's* cover caption ("Three Times at the Brink of War: How Dulles Gambled and Won") and the statements attributed to the Secretary in the article drew outcries from Democrats who had supported what they thought were the fundamentals of a bipartisan foreign policy. Sharp criticism was voiced also by numerous American and foreign newspapers.

Written by James Shepley, chief of the *Time-Life* bureau in Washington, the article was based on tape-recorded conversations between Dulles, Shepley, and a *Life* reporter regularly assigned to the State Department. The burden of the article was that a policy of "deterrence" necessarily involves certain risks; that Dulles, acting on his conviction that wars may be brought on through miscalculation, had three times moved to the "brink of war" in order to avert

⁵ Republican National Committee, "U.S. Foreign Policy—Eisenhower Administration Achievements" (undated), pp. 1-4.

Editorial Research Reports

it; and that on those occasions the Communists had backed down when confronted with a threat of retaliation by tactical atomic weapons.

The three occasions described by Shepley were: (1) In Korea in June 1953, when the release of 27,000 North Korean prisoners by South Korean President Syngman Rhee had raised fears that the Communists would break off truce negotiations and resume hostilities; (2) in Indo-China during April 1954, when the Communists were overpowering French and native resistance on the eve of the Geneva conference on Far Eastern problems; and (3) in Formosa Strait in January 1955, when Red China was bombarding the offshore islands of Quemoy and Matsu and President Eisenhower asked and received from Congress authority to repel any Communist attempt to conquer the island of Formosa.

Among numerous statements attributed to Dulles was a passage in which the Secretary was quoted directly on the use of deterrent power:

Always, of course, there has been and continues to be risk. You have to take chances for peace, just as you must take chances in war. Some say that we were brought to the verge of war. Of course we were brought to the verge of war. The ability to get to the verge without getting into the war is the necessary art. If you cannot master it, you inevitably get into war. If you try to run away from it, if you are scared to go to the brink, you are lost.

That passage, together with other assertions in the *Life* article, drew sharp comment from many quarters. Adlai Stevenson said: "I am shocked that the Secretary of State is willing to play Russian roulette with the life of our nation.⁶ I don't consider the art of diplomacy one in which we should repeatedly be led to the brink of war. The art of diplomacy, especially in this atomic age, must lead to peace, not war or the brink of war." House Speaker Rayburn (D-Tex.) declared that Dulles had endangered free world alliances. Sen. Hubert H. Humphrey (D-Minn.) accused the Secretary of distorting history, breaching bipartisanship, and damaging the United States before the world.

⁶ Former Secretary of State Acheson described Russian roulette in a book published last autumn, as a pastime in which "one puts a single cartridge in a revolver, spins the chamber, then puts the muzzle against one's head and pulls the trigger." Acheson said that in foreign affairs "such risks are possible, too," but "it is unwise to take them."—*A Democrat Looks at His Party* (1955), pp. 68-69.

Foreign Policy in Political Campaigns

DEFENSE OF DULLES BY REPUBLICAN LEADERS

Leading Republicans, including Vice President Nixon, Sen. William F. Knowland, and Harold E. Stassen, rallied to the defense of Dulles and accused opposition critics of distorting the Secretary's statements for partisan political ends. Nixon said on Jan. 14 that "The test of a foreign policy is its ability to keep the peace without surrendering any territory or any principle."

Secretary Dulles attempted to clarify his own views at a news conference on Jan. 17. He said that while he had been quoted accurately "in substance," the article as a whole had tended to oversimplify complex aspects of foreign policy. Deterrence was only one aspect, along with patience, a conciliatory attitude, and "making peace a vital force." Dulles said he had not read or censored the article or seen its startling title before publication.

Later comment by President Eisenhower, at his news conference Jan. 19, tempered the first sharp reactions to the Dulles affair. Reaffirming his faith in the Secretary of State, the President declined to be drawn into a discussion of decisions taken by the United States in the three areas (Korea, Indo-China, and Formosa Strait). But to set the record straight, he said the Korean war never had been pressed to a final decision because the crossing of the Yalu would have "shocked international opinion"; the Indo-China war was "probably settled on the best basis that could be achieved"; on the Formosa crisis he had been perfectly frank with Congress when he said in January 1955 that he would be guided by whether an attack was directed at Formosa or was "strictly and completely local."

The President's remarks did not entirely dispel fears aroused by Dulles's deterrence thesis, and they failed to answer the main question troubling Democratic critics: Had the United States Government actually decided on a policy of atomic retaliation, as the *Life* article asserted, and had the President concurred in such a policy?⁷

The words "brink of war" seemed likely to be heard often in the campaign of 1956. To political observers they

⁷ Henry R. Luce, editor-in-chief of *Life*, in a statement on Jan. 21 expressed regret for contributing to any misunderstanding of the position of the Secretary of State. He said that the article had been "shortened and edited," and that the headlines were "unfortunate" in the sense of not fully reflecting the main emphasis of the article. Luce did not retract any of the article's statements of fact.

Editorial Research Reports

recalled instances in past election battles when foreign policy was an outstanding issue and catch-words or slogans became potent campaign weapons.

Foreign Affairs Debates In Peace and War

FOREIGN ISSUES have been overshadowed by domestic issues in most of the 42 presidential elections held since 1789. At critical periods in the life of the nation, however, the interrelation of foreign and domestic affairs has been an outstanding factor in contests for the presidency.

Foreign affairs dominated the political scene from the end of Washington's first term to the War of 1812. During that period the young republic was weak and in fear of annihilation at the hands of hostile and warring European powers. Relations with Great Britain and France during the Napoleonic wars, Jefferson's embargo act, and impressment of American seamen by the British navy were among foreign issues that evoked heated political debate.⁸

During most of the remainder of the 19th century foreign policy occupied a subordinate place as attention was concentrated on pushing the frontier across the continent. American diplomacy remained largely outside the area of partisan debate until just before the turn of the century, when war with Spain again brought foreign issues into contention. The United States emerged from the Spanish-American war in 1898 with unexpected commitments in the West Indies and the Philippines, which led to vigorous debate on the issues of imperialism and annexation of insular territories beyond the continental domain.

In the presidential election of 1900 the Democratic nominee, William Jennings Bryan, called imperialism the "paramount issue." The platform, drafted by Bryan, declared that "The burning issue of imperialism growing out of the Spanish War involves the very existence of the republic and the destruction of our free institutions."

The Republicans, led by William McKinley, accepted the challenge and fought the election on a platform that sup-

⁸ See "Foreign Policy in National Elections," *E.R.R.*, Vol. I 1944, pp. 310-315.

Foreign Policy in Political Campaigns

ported continued occupation of the Philippines, approved annexation of Hawaii, favored construction of an isthmian canal, and accepted the peace treaty with Spain as the only way to "destroy Spain's sovereignty throughout the West Indies and the Philippine Islands." Disclaiming any thought of national aggrandizement, the Republican platform declared that the war had liberated ten million people and given the American people "a new and noble responsibility."

Bryan denounced the Republicans for abandoning America's traditional continental policy and demanded that the United States withdraw from the Philippines immediately. But he failed to convince the voters. With Republican victory, the country edged away from continental isolation. Under Theodore Roosevelt, who became President on McKinley's death in 1901, it welcomed the responsibilities attending its newly acquired position as a world power.

WILSON-HUGHES "KEEPING-OUT-OF-WAR" CAMPAIGN, 1916

War had been raging in Europe for two years when the 1916 election campaign got under way, with both parties pledged to maintain strict neutrality while defending American rights. The Democratic platform extolled President Wilson as one "who has preserved the vital interests of our government and its people and has kept us out of war." Bryan coined the party's campaign slogan at the St. Louis convention when he said, "I agree with the American people in thanking God that we have a President who has kept—who will keep—the country out of war."

The Republican platform called for "a strict and honest neutrality" under which "we must insist upon all our rights as neutrals without fear or favor." Charles Evans Hughes, Republican standard-bearer, assailed what he called Wilson's "weak and vacillating" policy, but he proposed no fundamental reversal of foreign policy and advanced no clear alternative. Theodore Roosevelt, joining the attack on Wilson, denounced the man "who kept us out of war" and so turned the phrase that it sounded like a promise to stand against American entry under any circumstances.

In his own speeches Wilson made no such pledge. He cited the administration's preparedness program and the "necessities of international action." The President also

Editorial Research Reports

emphasized the need to prepare for "the part which the United States will play in the new day of international relationships that is now upon us." At Wilson's request, the party platform included a section on Americanism that summoned "all men of whatever origin or creed who would count themselves Americans to join in making clear to all the world the unity and consequent power of America."

As the 1916 campaign entered the final weeks, Republican attacks on Wilson's foreign policy increased. Roosevelt asserted that if he had been President when the *Lusitania* was sunk, he would have seized every German vessel interned in American waters. Wilson replied to such Republican campaign utterances by asking the opposition party how it would change existing policy: "They say our present policy is wrong. If it is wrong, and they are men of conscience, they must change it; and if they are going to change it, in what direction are they going to change it?" The retort proved effective then, but four years later the debate on foreign policy was joined on issues that involved more fundamental reversals of America's traditional role in international affairs.

LEAGUE OF NATIONS IN THE 1920 PRESIDENTIAL CONTEST

A year before the 1920 campaign opened, President Wilson had returned from the Paris peace conference to face his last and most difficult battle—the fight to win ratification of the Treaty of Versailles, which included the Covenant of the League of Nations. Faced by strong and increasing opposition in the Senate, Wilson decided to take the issue directly to the American people. While on a speaking tour, he was stricken at Pueblo, Colo., Sept. 25, 1919, and thereafter he was virtually incapacitated.

The Senate refused to ratify the treaty in November 1919 and again in March 1920, when the issue was revived four months before the political conventions. Sen. Henry Cabot Lodge, Republican chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee who had led the anti-League forces, sounded the keynote at the Republican convention: "We must be now and ever for Americanism and nationalism and against internationalism."

The Republican platform, though less emphatic, generally conformed to the tone of Lodge's indictment of Wil-

Foreign Policy in Political Campaigns

sonian internationalism and of the record of the preceding Democratic administration. It straddled the issue of the League of Nations by declaring merely that "The Republican party stands for agreement among the nations to preserve the peace of the world" but "without compromise of national independence." The platform added that "The Covenant signed by the President in Paris . . . contained stipulations not only intolerable for an independent people but certain to produce the injustice, hostility, and controversy among nations which it is proposed to prevent."

The Democratic platform reaffirmed belief in the principles enunciated by Wilson and stated that "The Democratic party favors the League of Nations as the surest, if not the only, practicable means for maintaining the peace of the world."

Neither of the two candidates for President seemed to stir public enthusiasm. Harding conducted a "front-porch" campaign from his home at Marion, Ohio, and catered in his speeches to the public yearning to put the war behind and lay world problems aside. The Republican slogan of "Back to normalcy" proved an effective campaign phrase that captured the prevailing mood of the times.

Cox and his running mate, young Franklin D. Roosevelt, stumped the country trying to inject some vigor into the campaign. They attempted vainly to make political capital of Harding's ambiguous support of an "association of nations." Wilson described the election as a "solemn mandate" on foreign policy; the ailing President declared that the League of Nations represented the only hope of terminating the insufferable burden of great military and naval establishments. It was for this, he said, that "America broke away from traditional isolation and spent her blood and treasure." When the ballots were counted, however, the voters seemed to have been more concerned about bringing an end to high taxes and government interference in business than about principles of international relations.

SUBORDINATION OF FOREIGN ISSUES BETWEEN WARS

Foreign affairs played little part in national election campaigns during the two decades between the first and second world wars. As the opposition party in the 1920s, the Democrats reaffirmed their faith in the principles of

Editorial Research Reports

international cooperation and condemned the Republicans for having "no foreign policy."⁹ Republican platforms in 1924 and 1928 favored general "agreements among the nations to prevent war and preserve peace" and adherence to the World Court. Both parties supported the principle of "outlawing war" by international agreement, ultimately embodied in the Kellogg-Briand pact of 1928 renouncing war as an instrument of national policy.

As the rise of Hitler in Germany in the 1930s again raised the spectre of war in Europe, both American political parties supported neutrality legislation intended to keep the country out of foreign combat. In 1936, with Franklin D. Roosevelt seeking re-election for a second term, the Democratic platform pledged that "We shall continue to observe a true neutrality in the disputes of others." In the same year the Republican platform pledged the party "to promote and maintain peace by all honorable means not leading to foreign alliances or political commitments."

WAR AND POSTWAR ISSUES IN 1940 AND 1944 ELECTIONS

The war in Europe made foreign policy a major issue in the 1940 campaign. In advance of the party conventions there seemed to be a wide area of bipartisan agreement on maintaining American neutrality while aiding Great Britain by measures short of war; however, both parties were divided internally by so-called interventionist and isolationist factions.

When the Democratic convention met at Chicago in mid-July, two months after Hitler's armies had overrun France, Roosevelt was nominated for a third term on a platform that pledged: "We will not participate in foreign wars, and we will not send our army, naval or air forces to fight in foreign lands outside the Americas, except in case of attack." By measures short of war, the platform promised to extend "all the material aid at our command" to liberty-loving peoples "wantonly attacked by ruthless aggressors."

The Republican convention, which nominated Wendell Willkie after a bitterly fought contest with Dewey, Taft, and party "regulars," went on record against intervention

⁹The 1924 Democratic convention at Madison Square Garden witnessed a bitter internal struggle over a proposed foreign policy plank in strong support of the League of Nations. The issue was finally compromised by a statement that the party "renews its confidence in the ideals of world peace, the League of Nations, and the World Court." Thereafter, the League disappeared as a political issue.

Foreign Policy in Political Campaigns

in the war. The platform declared that "The Republican party is firmly opposed to involving this nation in foreign war." Charging that the New Deal administration had failed the country in a time of crisis, the platform continued: "The zero hour is here. America must prepare at once to defend our shores, our homes, our lives and our most cherished ideals."

At the start of the active campaign there was little difference between the two contestants regarding war issues and aid to Britain. Willkie was informed in advance of Roosevelt's decision to deliver 50 over-age destroyers to Britain in exchange for lease of air and naval base sites on British territory in the western Atlantic; the Republican candidate did not make the destroyer deal a campaign issue.

As the contest entered its final weeks, Willkie was persuaded by party tacticians to stop making understanding speeches about bipartisan foreign policy and lash out against Roosevelt in the old-fashioned way. Willkie thereupon attacked the President for leading the country to the threshold of war and told the voters that, if they elected the third-term candidate, America would soon be sending its sons to fight on foreign shores.

Republican reiteration of the keep-out-of-war theme disturbed Roosevelt's campaign advisers, and the President finally told a Boston audience at the close of the campaign: "I have said this before, but I shall say it again, and again, and again: 'Your boys are not going to be sent into foreign wars.'"

Such campaign utterances were forgotten when Japan's attack on Pearl Harbor, Dec. 7, 1941, plunged the United States into war. By the time the party conventions met again in 1944, the tide of battle had turned against the Axis powers in Europe and Asia; allied victory, though not yet achieved, was in sight.

As the wartime campaign approached, both political parties made genuine efforts to exclude from debate all major issues relating to the conduct of war and foreign relations. Secretary of State Hull proposed that such questions be omitted entirely from political discussion: "The supreme importance of these matters should lift them

Editorial Research Reports

far above the realm of partisan considerations or party politics," he said as early as Sept. 12, 1943.

In the spring of 1944 Hull sought an understanding with leading Senate Republicans to keep out of partisan debate the whole question of establishing an international organization to maintain the peace. The Secretary during April and May held a series of meetings with four Republican and four Democratic members of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, in the course of which plans for a United Nations organization were discussed. As a result, Hull was able to announce before the party conventions that agreement had been reached on "general principles, questions and plans relating to the establishment of an international peace and security organization." However, he was not able to persuade the senators to recommend specifically that the issue be barred from the campaign.¹⁰

After the Republican convention had nominated Gov. Dewey of New York, John Foster Dulles held conversations with Hull in a further effort to remove foreign issues from campaign politics.¹¹ Although no comprehensive agreement was reached, the party platforms had already registered wide bipartisan agreement on fundamental postwar aims. The Republican platform plank, largely the work of Sen. Vandenberg of Michigan, called for "responsible participation . . . in a postwar cooperative organization" and continued efforts to achieve conditions of peace and worldwide economic stability. The Democrats pledged support to the proposed United Nations organization and "all necessary and effective agreements and arrangements" for maintenance of lasting peace and security.

Campaign speeches by Roosevelt and Dewey, starting at a high level, descended to political recrimination in the final weeks of the canvass. Winding up the 1944 campaign at Madison Square Garden, New York, Dewey charged that Roosevelt's "own confused incompetence" had prolonged the war, and that the Democrats had offered "no program, nothing but smears and unspecified complaints, because the New Deal had nothing to offer." However, bipartisanship in foreign policy survived the campaign oratory.

¹⁰ *The Memoirs of Cordell Hull* (Vol. II 1948), pp. 1668-1669. Republican senators participating in the bipartisan talks were Vandenberg (Mich.), Austin (Vt.), LaFollette (Wis.), and White (Me.).

¹¹ See "Republicans and Foreign Policy," *E.R.R.*, Vol. II 1948, pp. 593-596.

Foreign Policy in Political Campaigns

STRAIN ON BIPARTISAN FOREIGN POLICY IN 1948 CANVASS

The bipartisan basis of American foreign policy that was established during the war came under severe strain in the election campaigns of 1948 and 1952. The necessity of combating Soviet Russia's aggressive postwar policies had compelled the United States to take decisive action to resist expansion of Communist power. In the main, the objectives laid down by President Truman commanded wide bipartisan support. Action taken to extend aid to Greece and Turkey in 1947, to launch the Marshall plan (1947-1948), and later to form the North Atlantic alliance and set up N.A.T.O. defense machinery was made possible through Republican cooperation.

As the conventions of 1948 drew near, however, many Republicans chafed under the restraints of bipartisanship in foreign affairs. The platform was not adopted without a fight between the Vandenberg wing of the party and the so-called "nationalists." The foreign policy plank, as finally worded, approved extension of the European recovery program "within the prudent limits of our own economic welfare" and gave support to the United Nations as "the world's best hope" for collective security. The Democrats, standing on the Roosevelt-Truman record, pledged continued leadership of the United States in the cause of peace and freedom.

As in 1944, discussion of foreign policy remained on a fairly high level up to the closing weeks of the campaign, when Republicans attacked the Truman administration for "softness" toward the Soviet Union and for opening the door to Communists in government. Dewey, again the G.O.P. standard-bearer, charged that the Truman administration had "tried appeasement one day and bluster the next" and declared that "Our country desperately needs new and better leadership in the cause of peace and freedom."

During the four years that followed Truman's surprise victory in 1948, the bipartisan foreign policy was subjected to new and greater strains. The Korean war that began in June 1950 was still in progress when the 1952 campaign got under way. Meanwhile, the Soviet Union's explosion of an atomic bomb, in September 1949, had made it evident that a third world war would bring catastrophe on a new order of magnitude.

Partisanship and Bipartisanship, 1952 and 1956

SELECTION of Gen. Eisenhower to head the Republican ticket in 1952 and choice of Gov. Stevenson as the Democratic candidate seemed to eliminate fundamental differences in the area of foreign affairs; both had supported the main objectives of American foreign policy in the postwar years. However, despite early appeals by the presidential candidates to lift foreign policy above partisan debate, the 1952 campaign soon made it the subject of personal and political recrimination.

The Republican platform set the tone for bitter attacks on "the Truman-Acheson record." The foreign policy plank, largely drafted by Dulles, charged that "the leaders of the administration in power lost the peace so dearly won by World War II . . . [and] abandoned friendly nations to fend for themselves against Communist aggression." The Republicans declared that with forethought "the Korean war would never have happened." Korea, like Yalta and Potsdam, was the result of "tragic blunders."

Republican campaign speakers asserted that "the Communist empire gained 600 million persons" during the period of the Truman administration. Richard M. Nixon, as Eisenhower's running-mate, declared that "The Truman-Acheson policies got us into wars." Dulles contended that the Truman administration was "writing the ticket for World War III" in its vacillating containment policy. McCarthyites linked a charge of "harboring Communists in the government" with the theme of "twenty years of treason."

Stevenson answered such charges by saying: "If there were mistakes, let us discuss them. But let us never confuse honest mistakes, mistakes of judgment, with the insidious designs of traitors. Those who corrupt the public mind are just as evil as those who steal from the public purse."

On Oct. 24, ten days before the balloting, Eisenhower made the dramatic pledge that, if elected, he would go to Korea to seek "an early and honorable end" to the war. Republicans hailed the action as a constructive move dem-

Foreign Policy in Political Campaigns

onstrating the kind of imaginative policies that would be pursued under "Ike's" leadership; Democrats called it a "cruel deception" in a desperate effort to win votes. After the election, however, Truman offered Eisenhower the presidential plane for his trip across the Pacific.¹²

THREAT TO BIPARTISANSHIP IN 1956 FOREIGN AID PLANS

Whether or not President Eisenhower is a candidate for re-election this year, the administration's handling of foreign relations since 1952, and foreign problems on which the White House is now seeking bipartisan support in Congress, are likely to be major campaign issues. The President asked Congress in his State of the Union message on Jan. 5 to "sustain and fortify" a foreign aid program that would give assurance of continuity in economic assistance to less developed countries over a period of years. The recent correspondence between Eisenhower and Soviet Premier Bulganin, made public Jan. 28, involved long-term questions going beyond the Soviet offer—and United States rejection—of a 20-year friendship treaty.

In pressing the proposed long-range foreign aid program, the administration faced considerable opposition in Congress in both parties. Senate Foreign Relations Chairman George and Senate Minority Leader Knowland warned the administration in January that they were opposed in principle to an expanded economic assistance program that would require Congress to obligate funds in advance for projects extending over a number of years. Both senators reportedly told President Eisenhower and Secretary Dulles that they feared the bipartisan front would be broken if the administration persisted in its effort.

During the last three years Congress has pared down the President's annual requests for foreign aid appropriations, with southern Democrats lining up with right-wing Republicans in opposition to further increases, particularly for economic assistance.¹³ However, Soviet economic competition in the Middle East and Asia has strengthened the conviction of administration leaders that the United States must have greater freedom of action than in the past in shaping programs of economic aid for underdeveloped countries like India and Egypt.

¹² The flight actually was made in an Air Force Constellation.

¹³ See "Economic Cold War," *E.R.R.*, Vol. I 1956, p. 26.

Editorial Research Reports

After a conference with Sen. George on Jan. 23, President Eisenhower indicated that the administration intended to press on with its request for limited authority to make certain long-term foreign aid commitments, such as financial assistance to Egypt for construction of the Aswan dam. George was reported to be willing to consider ways and means of financing specific projects, provided that Congress would retain a yearly check on foreign aid policies and spending.

TWO-PARTY SUPPORT FOR TREATMENT OF SOVIET RUSSIA

President Eisenhower's response to the Soviet proposal for a 20-year treaty of friendship and peace won wide bipartisan support in Congress. Sen. George called the President's note to Bulganin "a most excellent state paper" that reflected a spirit of conciliation. Similar comments came from other legislators of both parties, who praised Eisenhower's skill in rejecting the current Soviet offer without closing the door to future exchanges.

Some Democrats, including Sens. Mansfield (Mont.) and Humphrey (Minn.), complained that the President had not consulted the Senate Foreign Relations Committee before replying to Bulganin's note. Apart from that point, however, there was no indication that the decisions taken by the President had strained the spirit of bipartisanship.

Looking ahead, many Democrats and Republicans nevertheless are concerned over the possibility that relations with Russia and events in the Middle East may develop in such a way as to inject an excess of acrimony into campaign debates on foreign policy. A prospect of conflict with Republican right-wingers arose, Feb. 1, when the joint communique issued at the end of President Eisenhower's talks with Prime Minister Eden hinted at modification of the U.N. embargo on shipment of strategic materials to Red China. The record of past campaigns affords little comfort to those who believe that statesmanship should take precedence over partisan advantage in contests for the favor of the voters.

